The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of a traditional Kwakwaka'wakw regalia necklace. The necklace is composed of numerous white, circular beads arranged in a complex, interlocking pattern. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the beads and the intricate design of the necklace. The overall color palette is light blue and white, giving the slide a clean and professional appearance.

I'm not learning a second  
language, I'm learning my  
language: Being  
Kwakwaka'wakw and  
learning Kwak'wala

Trish Rosborough  
2013 International Conference on  
Language Documentation &  
Conservation:  
Sharing Worlds of Knowledge

# This Presentation

- purpose of research
- locate myself and my language
- methodology and method
- learnings
- reflections



# Quilt Square



# Purpose of the Research

Through Indigenous methodology based on the metaphor of creating Kangextola, this is a study of my journey of learning and speaking Kwak'wala.

The Purpose: to better understand what supports Kwak'wala learning and speaking.

“I approach my work through my identity, which is built upon where I come from, who I belong to, and my relationships within family and community.”



# Kwak'wala: The language of the Kwakwaka'wakw

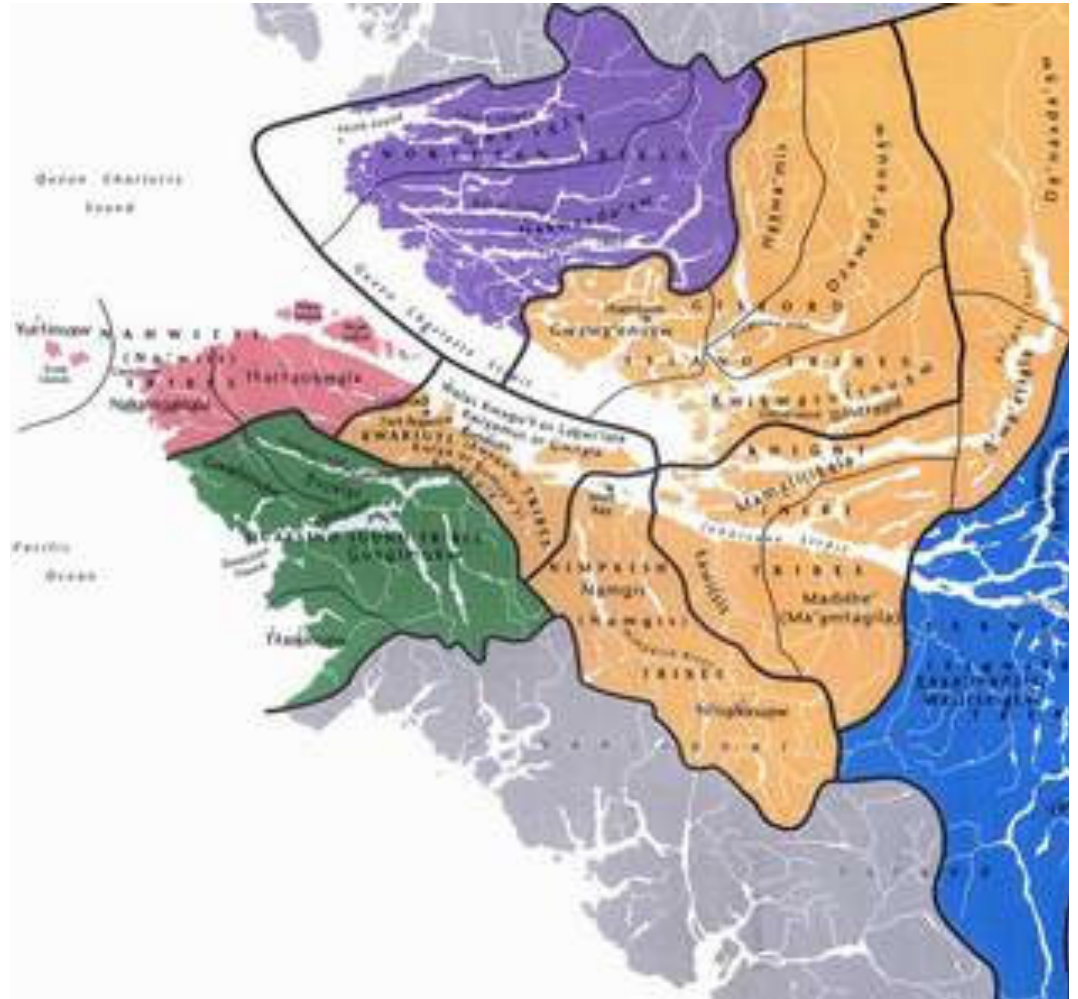
The language of 15 FNs of Northern Vancouver Island and the adjacent mainland.

Considered by FPHLCC to be endangered.

Estimated 148 fluent speakers – most of these speakers are elderly

Documented for more than  
a century

## Revitalization work for more than three decades



# Methodology and Method

## Methodology

Kwakwaka'wakw approaches to knowledge

The need for a methodology that would align with Kwakwaka'wakw ways

Kangextola – ceremonial regalia of the Kwakwaka'wakw and other Indigenous peoples of the northwest coast

Kangextola – as a product and a process rich in story





# Kangextola – sewn-on-top



tsik'wi design, Rande Cook and John Livingston; border design, John Livingston and Trish Rosborough; stitching, Maxine'bidu, Maxine'dzi, and Trish Rosborough

# Methodology and Method

## Method

- Documented my journey as a Kwak'wala learner
- Including 2 years in a Master–Apprentice relationship
- Created and shared stories of my journey
- Interviewed 6 community members who are engaged in Kwak'wala revitalization





# *My Grandmothers' Buttons*





# Understanding the context within which Kwak'waka revitalization occurs: the impacts of colonization





*Hidden*





“I’m not learning a second language, I am learning my language”





“the fear of criticism is a real barrier...one of the primary barriers to reviving Kwak’wala” Marianne Nicolson





“...and that’s one of the reasons my dad won’t speak, ‘cause he says that his cousins will laugh at him” Kwakwaka’wakw community member





“wiga’xan’s ‘wila yak’antala san’s yakandas”  
Andrea Alfred-Smith





“there does not seem to be enough motivation at the community level to do what needs to be done to revive the language” Anonby





For Kwak'wala revitalization to be decolonizing, it is important to sustain the spirit of the language.





“If you’re going to give a potlatch and you’re the chief, and after your potlatch is over, the chief gets up to make a speech, and he just speaks English. I don’t agree with that.” Beverly Lagis



“It grounds me...takes the past and brings it forward, or brings it here with me.” Emily Aitken





“I really wish I could share that ‘Aha!’ You know, like, ‘wow, this is amazing!’”  
Marianne Nicolson





# *Lagwił*



*atti*





# The Lifeline: Reflections





Lax hasayesida  
Kwak'wala







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2013 ICLDC  
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